

transmitting a solicitation to only selected members from the pool of vendors [said at least one vendor];

receiving bid response data from at least one of said vendors which received said solicitation, said bid response data identifying each of the vendors from which it was received [from] and a bid price; and

outputting to said buyer said bid response data[; and]

transmitting an order to the vendor represented by said approval data].

2. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 1,

wherein said job data further includes a selection criteria data, said selection criteria specifying at least one of a vendor name, a vendor capability, a descriptor of an ownership characteristic of said vendor [vender], a descriptor of a union status of said vendor, and a vendor geographical location, and

wherein said comparison is based on said selection criteria data.

4. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 2 further comprising steps of:

ranking bid response data according to bid price; and

publishing data to other vendors identifying said selected vendor and rank order of said received bid [response] data.

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Please cancel claim 5.

6. (Once Amended) A method according to claim 2, wherein said vendor capability data represents the identified vendor's capability to manufacture each of a plurality of different types of customized goods or furnish each of a plurality of customized services.

7. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 1, further comprising steps of:  
transmitting from a central data server to said buyer an invoice for payment of said  
bid price;

inputting a payment from said buyer into an escrow account serving as a single-source  
accounts payable destination for the buyer's vendor payments; and  
transferring a payment from said escrow account to an account of said vendor  
corresponding to the invoice payment data.

19. (Twice Amended) A method according to claim 1 further comprising a step of  
creating a web site[,] and  
wherein step of receiving a vendor record comprises a step of said vendor visiting said  
web site and inputting said record using a web browser.

20. (Once Amended) A method according to claim 1,  
wherein said job data includes a preferred vendor data identifying at least one  
preferred or non-preferred vendor, and  
wherein said step of transmitting a solicitation includes transmitting said solicitation  
to said at least one preferred vendor or precluding transmitting said solicitation to said at least  
one non-preferred vendor.

22. (Once Amended) A system for bidding by vendors of customized goods and  
services, comprising:

[A] a general purpose computer having a data storage;

means for inputting a plurality of vendor records into said data storage, each of said vendor records having a vendor identifier data [identifying] representing a vendor and a vendor capability data representing a capabilities of said vendor to provide a customized good or service for each of a plurality of vendors in a pool of vendors;[.]

means for inputting a job data into said data storage, said job data having a buyer identifier data [identifying a buyer], a job description data [describing] representing a custom job for which said buyer wishes a price quote or bid [, and a selection criteria data];

means for automatically generating a vendor pool data, said vendor pool data representing vendor records for at least one group from the pool of vendors as qualified to bid on said custom job, each vendor record represented by the vendor pool data being qualified based on a match of at least one of a group consisting of said buyer identifier data, said job description data, and said selection criteria data to at least one of a group consisting of said vendor qualification data and said vendor identifier data;

means for transmitting a solicitation to [the] selected members [vendors represented by vendor records] in said vendor pool;

means for inputting into said general purpose computer a plurality of bid data, each being from a vendor to which said solicitation was transmitted, each of said bid data representing a bid price;

means for identifying a bid data from said received bid data having a [the lowest represented] bid price; and

means for outputting to said buyer [a selected vendor data representing the identify of the vendor corresponding to the lowest bid data identified by said identifying means] said bid data.[;

means for receiving an approval data from said buyer, the approval data indicating an approval of one of said vendor represented by said selected vendor data or another of said vendors

means for transmitting an order to the vendor represented by said received approval data.]

24. (Once Amended) A method for [competitive] bidding by vendors of customized goods [or] and services, comprising steps of:

receiving a job data from said buyer, said job data having a buyer identifier data representing said buyer, and a job descriptor data representing a custom job for which said buyer wishes a price quote or bid;

distributing to a plurality of vendors, by electronic publishing, a job advertising data representing said custom job;

receiving a bid response data from at least one of said plurality of vendors, said bid response data identifying the vendor it was received from, a bid price, and an alternative specification data representing a proposed deviation from said job descriptor data;

identifying a selected bid from said received bid response data, based on comparative values of said bid price and said alternative specification data;

transmitting an order to the vendor represented by said selected bid;

generating a job milestone data based on said job descriptor data; and

receiving job progress data from said vendor represented by said selected bid.

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CLEAN VERSION OF CLAIMS

1. A method for bidding by vendors of customized goods or services, comprising steps of:

receiving a vendor record, said vendor record having vendor identifier data representing a vendor, and a vendor capability data identifying a capability of said vendor to provide a customized good or service for each of a plurality of vendors in a pool of vendors;

b1 receiving a job data from a buyer, said job data having a buyer identifier data, and a job descriptor data representing a custom job for which said buyer wishes a price quote or bid;

automatically comparing said vendor records to said job data;

automatically identifying at least one group from the pool of vendors as qualified for receiving an invitation for bid, based on said comparison;

transmitting a solicitation to only selected members from the pool of vendors;

receiving bid response data from at least one of said vendors which received said solicitation, said bid response data identifying each of the vendors from which it was received and a bid price; and

outputting to said buyer said bid response data.

2. A method according to claim 1,

wherein said job data further includes a selection criteria data, said selection criteria specifying at least one of a vendor name, a vendor capability, a descriptor of an ownership characteristic of said vendor, a descriptor of a union status of said vendor, and a vendor geographical location, and

wherein said comparison is based on said selection criteria data.

B2  
4. A method according to claim 2 further comprising steps of:  
ranking bid response data according to bid price; and  
publishing data to other vendors identifying said selected vendor and rank order of  
said received bid data.

B3  
6. A method according to claim 2, wherein said vendor capability data represents  
the identified vendor's capability to manufacture each of a plurality of different types of  
customized goods or furnish each of a plurality of customized services.

B4  
7. A method according to claim 1, further comprising steps of:  
transmitting from a central data server to said buyer an invoice for payment of said  
bid price;  
inputting a payment from said buyer into an escrow account serving as a single-source  
accounts payable destination for the buyer's vendor payments; and  
transferring a payment from said escrow account to an account of said vendor  
corresponding to the invoice payment data.

B5  
19. A method according to claim 1 further comprising a step of creating a web  
site; and  
wherein step of receiving a vendor record comprises a step of said vendor visiting said  
web site and inputting said record using a web browser.

B6  
20. A method according to claim 1,  
wherein said job data includes a preferred vendor data identifying at least one  
preferred or non-preferred vendor, and

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wherein said step of transmitting a solicitation includes transmitting said solicitation to said at least one preferred vendor or precluding transmitting said solicitation to said at least one non-preferred vendor.

22. A system for bidding by vendors of customized goods and services, comprising:

a general purpose computer having a data storage;  
means for inputting a plurality of vendor records into said data storage, each of said vendor records having a vendor identifier data representing a vendor and a vendor capability data representing a capabilities of said vendor to provide a customized good or service for each of a plurality of vendors in a pool of vendors;

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means for inputting a job data into said data storage, said job data having a buyer identifier data, a job description data representing a custom job for which said buyer wishes a price quote or bid;

means for automatically generating a vendor pool data, said vendor pool data representing vendor records for at least one group from the pool of vendors as qualified to bid on said custom job, each vendor record represented by the vendor pool data being qualified based on a match of at least one of a group consisting of said buyer identifier data, said job description data, and said selection criteria data to at least one of a group consisting of said vendor qualification data and said vendor identifier data;

means for transmitting a solicitation to selected members in said vendor pool;

means for inputting into said general purpose computer a plurality of bid data, each being from a vendor to which said solicitation was transmitted, each of said bid data representing a bid price;

means for identifying a bid data from said received bid data having a bid price; and

means for outputting to said buyer said bid data.

24. A method for bidding by vendors of customized goods and services, comprising steps of:

receiving a job data from said buyer, said job data having a buyer identifier data representing said buyer, and a job descriptor data representing a custom job for which said buyer wishes a price quote or bid;

distributing to a plurality of vendors, by electronic publishing, a job advertising data representing said custom job;

receiving a bid response data from at least one of said plurality of vendors, said bid response data identifying the vendor it was received from, a bid price, and an alternative specification data representing a proposed deviation from said job descriptor data;

identifying a selected bid from said received bid response data, based on comparative values of said bid price and said alternative specification data;

transmitting an order to the vendor represented by said selected bid;

generating a job milestone data based on said job descriptor data; and

receiving job progress data from said vendor represented by said selected bid.